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Friday, 26 February 2010, 16:37
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, INR/AA
NSC FOR GAVIN
OSD FOR DASD HUDDLESTON
LONDON FOR POL (PLORD)
PARIS FOR POL (BAIN AND KANEDA)
ROME FOR AF WATCHER
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU
EO 12958 DECL: 2020/02/26
TAGS PREL, PGOV, PINS, PINR, PTER, MARR, NI
SUBJECT: GOODLUCK JONATHAN REMAINS ACTING PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA
REF: ABUJA 207; FEB 24 A/S CARSON-AMB SANDERS TELCON
CLASSIFIED BY: Robin R. Sanders, Ambassador, STATE, EXEC; REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Ambassador met February 26 with Acting President (AgP) Dr. Goodluck Jonathan at the Vice President's official residence, Aguda House, i

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WHO'S IN CHARGE?

¶2. (C) Jonathan told the Ambassador "everyone's confused" about who is in charge of Nigeria. There has been an increase in the level of uncert
¶3. (C) The AgP lamented, "This terrible situation in the country today has been created by four people: Turai Yar'Adua [the ailing President's
¶4. (C) Jonathan said the CSO and ADC saw him separately to let him know that they did not intend to mistreat the AgP and expressed their willi

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ENCOURAGE PRESIDENT TO RESIGN

¶5. (C) The AgP said that Former Head of State Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, who according to Jonathan has become one of his closest advisors, wou
¶6. (C) Once Yar'Adua resigns and Jonathan becomes interim President, he said he would choose a Vice President that could appease the Northerne
candidate. AgP Jonathan also shared that until Yar'Adua resigns, and things come down he would not leave the country. (N.B. This is in referenc

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FEARS ABOUT MILITARY

¶7. (C) Jonathan said "everyone, including the Army Chief of Staff (COAS) [LTG Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau] and Chief of the President Guards Br

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USG ADVICE: BECOME A NATIONAL FIGURE

¶8. (C) Based on points developed telephonically with Assistant Secretary Carson (ref B), Ambassador encouraged Jonathan to change the percepti
and diminish the appearance he is a regional leader.
¶9. (C) Jonathan noted that the Northern politicians would always be uncomfortable with him as president, and he understood the ruling People's
¶10. (C) Jonathan shared initially, he had the intention to dissolve the Cabinet early the week of February 22, and had planned to make that an

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ELECTORAL REFORM AND INEC

¶11. (C) Jonathan agreed to the USG offer of technical assistance to review and update Nigeria's national voter registry and funding for a Para
¶12. (C) On the INEC Chairman, Ambassador told the AgP that the USG
would not continue any election assistance if Iwu remains on seat after June 2010. She described the meeting between A/S Carson and Iwu, noting
¶13. (C) Jonathan said he does not anticipate standing for elections in 2011 and that he is not working towards being a presidential candidacy.

FIRM UP THE PARTNERSHIP AGAINST TERRORISM

¶14. (S) Ambassador raised with the AgP the case of Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed (aka "Talha"). Talha was indicted earlier this week in New York on te
¶15. (S) The AgP said he would call in SSS Director General Gadzama to clarify the security agency's role in Talha's near-release and that if t

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COMMENT

¶16. (C) After two days of uncertainty, that included signals of competing heads of state emanating from the dueling titular references within